

Message Text

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FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY AND EUR/CAN

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SUBJ: PRESS COMMENT ON AMBASSADOR PORTER'S REMARKS
TO JOURNALISTS

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF EDITORIAL IN DEC 17 OTTAWA
JOURNAL ENTITLED "SHOULD HE HAVE LIED INSTEAD?"

QUOTE:

THE PRIME MINISTER WAS "SURPRISED": THREE TIMES HE USED
THE WORD IN ANSWERING QUESTIONS IN THE COMMONS ABOUT U.S.
AMBASSADOR WILLIAM PORTER'S LITTLE DIALOGUE ON US-
CANADIAN RELATIONS. MR. TRUDEAU WAS MIFFED, AND MR.
TRUDEAU WAS PETULANT ABOUT THE WHOLE BUSINESS. THAT IS
HIS PROBLEM. BUT MR. TRUDEAU WAS ALSO INFANTILE AND
UNINFORMED; THAT, UNFORTUNATELY, IS THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEM.

MR. TRUDEAU REACTED IN PRECISELY THE WAY HE SHOULD
NOT HAVE REACTED, IN A MANNER BECOMING HIS EGO, NOT HIS
INTELLIGENCE; IN A MANNER, ALAS, WHICH IS NOW AS UTTERLY
PREDICTABLE AS WERE THE DOCTRINAIRE NATIONALISTIC
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RAVINGS OF EDWARD BROADBENT OF THE NDP ABOUT IMPROPER

INTERFERENCE IN CANADIAN AFFAIRS.

THE PRIME MINISTER CHOSE HAUTEUR TO ACCOMPANY SUPRISE. "I HAVE NOT SEEN THE TEXT OF AMBASSADOR PORTER'S STATEMENT," HE SAID NOT ONCE BUT TWICE. AND PRESIDENT FORD HADN'T THOUGHT TO MENTION ANY SUCH PROBLEMS AND AFTER ALL HADN'T HE TALKED WITH HIM THREE TIMES WITHIN A YEAR--COUNT IT. NOR HAD SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER. DON'T BOTHER MR. TRUDEAU WITH MERE AMBASSADORS.

WELL, THE STUDIED ARROGANCE AND SPLENDID IRRELEVANCIES DO NOT WORK. THERE WAS NO TEXT OF MR. PORTER'S WORDS BECAUSE THEY WERE AN EXTEMPORANEOUS RESPONSE TO AN INVITATION FROM SOME ASSEMBLED REPORTERS TO EXPRESS SOME OF HIS VIEWS AS HE WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE HIS CANADIAN POST. MR. TRUDEAU KNEW THAT AND HE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT MR. PORTER HAS EARNED HIS REPUTATION OF BEING NOT ONLY A FIRST-RATE AMBASSADOR, BUT A FRIEND OF CANADA.

MR. TRUDEAU KNOWS ALSO THAT AMBASSADORS CAN RAISE MATTERS OF CONCERN IN ADVANCE OF THE TIME WHEN SUCH CONCERNS MERIT THE FULL AND FORMAL MENTION OF HEADS OF STATE OR MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. SUCH IS ONE OF THE ADMIRABLE USES OF AMBASSADORS: TO STOP PROBLEMS FROM BECOMING MORE SERIOUS PROBLEMS.

MR. PORTER DID NOT TELL CANADIANS WHAT THEY SHOULD DO; HE MADE NO THREATS. HE HAS BEEN HONEST AND FRANK ENOUGH TO SUGGEST SOME OF THE CONSEQUENCES IN THE UNITED STATES OF SOME CURRENT CANADIAN POLICIES AND ATTITUDES IN AN ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE FORUM. THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN REMARKABLY DOCILE TOWARDS SOME CANADIAN ACTIONS WHICH HAVE A DIRECT BEARING UPON ITS INTERESTS OR THE INTERESTS OF ITS NATIONALS. CANADIAN SENSITIVITIES ABOUT CANADIAN INDEPENDENCE HAVE BEEN WELL UNDERSTOOD IN WASHINGTON, CONTRARY TO SME POPULAR MYTHOLOGY.

BUT WHEN MR. PORTER, OR ANY OTHER INFORMED AMERICAN, WARNS THAT SOME CANADIAN POLICIES MAY BE EVOKING UNCLASSIFIED

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ANTAGONISM IN THE UNITED STATES, IT IS PLAIN FOOLHARDINESS NOT TO LISTEN.

WHEN MR. PORTER SAID THAT CANADIAN-U.S. COOPERATION ON SCIENTIFIC MATTERS WAS NOT AS CLOSE AS IT ONCE WAS, THEN CANADIANS SHOULD BE AT LEAST AWARE OF THE CONSEQUENCES. MOST CANADIANS HAD NOT EVEN REALIZED THAT SUCH A SITUATION HAD ARISEN, MUCH LESS DECIDED WHETHER THEY LIKED

IT. IF THE AMERICANS MAKE A BREAKTHROUGH IN FINDING NEW SOURCES OF ENERGY WITH NO CANADIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE NEW TECHNOLOGY, THE DISADVANTAGE TO THIS COUNTRY WILL BE GREAT.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE POINTS MR. PORTER RAISED: QUESTIONS CLEARLY IN CANADA'S BEST INTERESTS TO DISCUSS ON EVERY LEVEL. YET MR. TRUDEAU PLAYS THE ROLE OF PRIMA DONNA AND BEHAVES AS IF THERE WAS SOME IMPROPRIETY ON MR. PORTER'S PART OR THAT HE, MR. TRUDEAU, KNOWS MORE ABOUT WHAT AMERICANS ARE THINKING THAN MR. PORTER. THE ARROGANCE IS STUPEFYING.

PERHAPS THE U. S. GOVERNMENT AND SOME AMERICANS (LIKE MANY CANADIANS) DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND OR AGREE WITH CANADA'S POSITION ON TIME AND READER'S DIGEST, ON FOREIGN INVESTMENT, ON OIL PRICING, ON NATIONALIZING POTASH. PERHAPS AMERICAN PERCEPTIONS ABOUT WHAT CANADIANS ARE ABOUT ARE WRONG.

WELL, IF THOSE PERCEPTIONS ARE WRONG, CANADA BETTER START DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT. CANADIANS SHOULD START BALANCING THE CONSEQUENCES OF ANTAGONIZING THE AMERICANS AGAINST THE SUPPOSED ADVANTAGES OF NARROW POLICIES OF APPARENT SELF-INTEREST. CANADIANS MUST DECIDE IF THE ANTAGONISM IS WORTH THE RISKS. AS IT NOW IS, CANADA IS BLUNDERING TOWARDS MISADVENTURE. FOR HIS WARNING, MR. PORTER DESERVES THANKS, NOT MR. TRUDEAU'S PETTY PIQUE. END QUOTE.

2. BOTH OTTAWA JOURNAL AND CITIZEN DEC 17 CARRIED FRONT PAGE STORIES CLAIMING SECRETARY KISSINGER "REPUDIATED" AND "DID NOT AUTHORIZE" REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR PORTER, UNCLASSIFIED

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UNDER RESPECTIVE HEADLINES "PORTER BLAST NOT OKAYED BY KISSINGER" AND "KISSINGER APOLOGIZES: RUG PULLED FROM UNDER AMBASSADOR". FOLLOWING THESE LEADS, PAPERS GAVE RELATIVELY FACTUAL ACCOUNTS OF KISSINGER-MACEACHEN PRESS CONFERENCE. CITIZEN ADDED PARAGRAPH ALLEGING THAT "SECRETARY KISSINGER TOLD A REPORTER HE DID NOT WISH TO DISCUSS AMBASSADOR PORTER'S REMARKS, WHICH HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD HAD NOT BEEN QUOTED CORRECTLY." LEARY

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